

**REMARKS**

Claims 40-42 are pending in this application. Support for new claims 40-42 can be found in the claims as filed.

In an effort to obtain an early notice of allowance and without in any sense conceding the correctness of any related rejections, claims 1-39 have been cancelled. Claims 1-39 also have been cancelled without prejudice to Applicants' right to prosecute such claims in one or more continuing application(s). No new matter has been introduced

Favorable reconsideration and allowance of this application is respectfully requested.

***ALLOWABLE SUBJECT MATTER***

Applicants note with thanks the Examiner's indication that the subject matter of claims 9-11 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. Accordingly, claims 9-11 have been cancelled, and new claims 40-42 have been added. Claims 40-42 correspond to the subject matter of cancelled claims 9-11, albeit in independent form. Therefore, Applicants respectfully submit that the application is now in condition for allowance.

***REJECTIONS UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 112***

Applicants submit that the rejection of claims 2-4 as being indefinite has been rendered moot by Applicants' cancellation of these claims. Withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

***REJECTIONS UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 102***

Applicants submit that the rejection of claims 1, 2, 7 and 8 as being anticipated by U.S. Patent 5,428,014 to Labroo et al. (Labroo) has been rendered moot by Applicants' cancellation of these claims. Withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

***REJECTIONS UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 103***

Applicants submit that the rejection of claims 1-8, 12 and 13 as being obvious over Labroo in view of "Synthesis and characterization of enzymatically-cross-linked poly(ethylene glycol) hydrogels" Macromolecules 30: 5255-5264 (1997) to Sperinde et al. (Sperinde) has been rendered moot by Applicants' cancellation of these claims. Withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

*CONCLUSION*

A petition for three-month extension of time is included. In addition, a Power of Attorney and Correspondence Address Indication Form is also included, with the accompanying statement under 37 CFR 3.73(b) and copy of the recorded assignment. No additional fees are believed due. However, the Commissioner is authorized to charge any additional fees under 37 CFR §1.17 or 37 CFR §136(a)(3) that may be due on this application to Deposit Account 17-0055.

Respectfully submitted,

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